INTERIM REPORT on the HEALTH and SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES of the

RURAL DISTRICT of WELLINGTON (SALOP) for the YEAR

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On the instructions of the Ministry of Health, the scope of the Annual Report has been restricted and again appears in an abridged form.

In the directions issued for guidance, it has been pointed out that comparisons are likely to be fallacious owing to the variety and magnitude of local population movement, and the uneven incidence of civilian deaths. This being so, it is not intended to submit figures which would apparently be the basis for accurate comparison with those of peace time. Nevertheless, such figures as can be given and may be indicative to some extent of internal population changes, of improvements in services and the presence of disease in the Area will be found in the relevant sections of the Report.

Despite the emergency conditions development continued on a considerable scale, particularly in the more populous eastern area. Priority housing with the provision for main services to these was pushing ahead and towards the end of the Year it was beginning to be felt that a grasp of the control of sanitation in the new schemes was being obtained. A more detailed survey of progress is to be found in the appropriate sections of the Report.

Summarising the incidence of infectious disease, it will be noted that while there was some degree of local infection, involving a considerable number of notifiable diseases, at no time did the scale or severity of attack give rise for concern.

1941 saw the gradual adoption of the Emergency Measures put into force in 1940 to meet the changed conditions of administration. Orders concerning Water Supplies, the Control of Housing, certain Infectious Diseases and the Services of Meat to the Town were the chief instances of these. For the current year the Ministry of Health found it necessary to guard against the possibility of spread of disease which could be associated with overcrowding and the movement of population. Orders giving guidance in the control and prevention are concerned with Typhus and Scabies and, in connection with these, measures to be taken against lice.

During the course of the Year the Ministry of Food, as an extension of their rationing scheme, granted invalids certain privileges and concessions to secure a more abundant supply of certain articles; milk and eggs were the main items involved.

Officers of Authorities were given the opportunity to become proficient in the methods of dealing with gas-contaminated foodstuffs. For this purpose a series of lectures was held in Birmingham. The application of this instruction to his locality was the chief consideration of the Sanitary Inspector.

The Principal Regional Medical Officer at Birmingham has, at times, directed attention to foods likely to carry disease through contamination and has advised the Council on domestic problems of medical procedure.

The capacity of the District to deal with the hospitalization of expectant mothers was the subject of an investigation by the County Medical Officer.

The attention of Medical Practitioners has been directed, as occasion arose, to matters of common interest; this with a view to securing the maximum co-operation in the maintenance of efficiency in health practice.

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During the course of the year, the junior Sanitary Inspector had opportunity to familiarise himself with conditions in the District and had a close association in the campaign for control of Diphtheria.

The Medical Officer takes this occasion to thank your Officers for their ever ready help and advice in the control of hygiene in the Area: a help particularly appreciated in remembrance of the multifarious duties added to their normal routine.

Special mention should be made of your General & Committee Clerk through whose collaboration this Report is presented in its completed form.

POPULATION

With the continued movement of persons in the Area, an exact assessment of total population is difficult, if not impossible. While the belt running from Donnington to Wellington continues to be the centre making the greatest demand for accommodation in houses and lodgings, much interest may be felt in the development of areas more remotely situated. These districts, definitely rural in character, have experienced a steady flow of people called to work on emergency contracts and priority schemes, and, through the permanent constructional work carried out, it is possible to visualise a more even distribution of population within the confines of the Authority on the return to normal times.

The presence in particular districts of new-comers making there their future homes should have considerable bearing on the mode of life. It is hoped that the best standards of both new-comers and local residents will be assimilated in the future communal living.

The above immigration and development has, in certain instances, outstripped social and domestic service reorganisation. In not every case has it been found possible to meet the demands for these and the housewife may have suffered more than others. The Council has made great efforts to improve facilities and conveniences and, in this connection, increased bus service and the more regular delivery of coal to the home have resulted from their direct action.

So far as the Donnington Area is concerned, the two main Towns, Newport and Wellington, continue to supply the amenities of social life, but it is anticipated that, with further progress, these services will be available in the midst of the settlement.

Certain Figures and Statistics supplied by the Ministry.

	Males	Females	
Live Births	169	180	
of these	5	7	were illegitimate
Still Births	12	6	one "

Deaths under one year ... 23 (3 illegitimate)

	Males	Females
Deaths	113	119

Some of the causes of death :-

Whooping Cough	...	3
Tuberculosis	...	10
Influenza	...	8
Cancer	...	30
Pneumonia	...	13
Suicide	...	2
Road Accidents	...	7

HEALTH LABORATORY SERVICE

The pathological and bacteriological connection with the University of Birmingham has been severed with the opening of the Donaldson-Hudson Laboratory at Shrewsbury. This has been built as an annexe to the Royal Salop Infirmary.
Another connection with the Emergency Health Laboratory at Wellington was broken when it was decided to remove their Headquarters to Hereford. The latter, situated locally, had been a great convenience in the investigation of outbreaks of infectious diseases and in the maintenance of supplies in the diphtheria prevention campaign.

AMBULANCE SERVICE

No changes have been made in this and no difficulties have been experienced in the course of the Year.

WATER SUPPLIES

The principal work has been the continuation to completion of the Lilleshall Water Scheme. In this Scheme the No. 3 Borehole - work on which was already advanced - was finished about midsummer and tests were immediately carried out. From those tests it was found that the pump could supply 720,000 gallons in 24 hours and this quantity could be maintained. This, together with the yield of the Borehole No. 1, will enable the Authority to provide over a million gallons per day, and that quantity will be available for factory and domestic use in the neighbourhood.

In conjunction with the work on the borehole site itself, the building of a 10 ins. rising main to the reservoir to carry this water was in progress. This connection, the furthering of which received much attention from the Committee, was delayed on account of labour difficulties.

While around the above centred the first considerations of the Council, certain other additions and improvements were made in the general scheme at these Works.

At the No. 1 Borehole a new pump to give greater efficiency and supply, work on the installation of which was in progress at the beginning of the Year, was put into use early in the Spring. To meet possible contingencies, the Authority decided to make provision for power by alternative means to ensure constant working of the plant: for this purpose a diesel engine is to be obtained.

Connections have been made to the main from properties in the Humbers District and certain local extensions were granted to meet the demands of temporary emergency planning.

An estimation of the use of water in this neighbourhood for industrial purposes, made at midsummer, computated that some 175,000 gallons each day were being used for this purpose solely.

Apart from this Central Pumping Station lesser schemes within the confines of the District have constantly been receiving attention. Service has been given to a temporary encampment in the Cluddley Area. This was given with the proviso that the water should be chlorinated.

The shortage to the Broadway Estate houses and a means of improving supplies was investigated.

Again, an extension to the Overley District, on the extreme border of the Authority, has been considered and the possibility of the use of an alternative route to overcome certain supply difficulties has received attention.

This work has not yet been completed, but should be early in the incoming Year.

The supply to Crowder Terrace Housing was subjected to an analytical examination and was found to be cloudy and to be carrying a heavy content of ferrous oxide. The cloudiness and proportion of iron was able to be reduced by the more frequent use of the pump and it was considered that with use in greater quantity the water would be suited for all domestic purposes, without any detriment to health. It is contemplated that in the future this area may be used for an extension of housing and the Committee had, at the end of the Year, adopted provisionary plans for the sinking of a second borehole in those parts.

In the Edgmond Parish improvements were adopted to give a more constant supply to the homes served.

Apart from the above, involving larger schemes, many small wells serving individual homes or lesser groups of houses have been inspected on complaint. In this connection supplies at Stockton, Cold Hatton and the Maltshovel were visited by the Sanitary Inspector and in each case improvements were suggested and, in most cases, carried out.

The Authority decided to participate in the Mutual Aid Scheme to provide assistance in material and labour to other Districts which might suffer as the result of enemy action. In this co-operative movement association with the Urban Districts of Oakengates and Wellington will be closest.

As it has never, as yet, been possible to ensure an adequate supply to completely meet the needs of the Lawley-Ketley Area, negotiations have begun and are still proceeding with the Dawley Council in the endeavour to find a means of overcoming the difficulties and augmenting supplies.

Over all general schemes the water has been chlorinated and, in the case of the Lilleshall supply, special sand interceptors have been provided in the chlorination plant.

Samples from main supplies and from certain wells have been submitted quarterly for analyses and in all the major schemes the results have been satisfactory.

The general control of water undertakings has been systematised by the Council and a more accurate means of recording has been adopted.

SCAVENGING

At the beginning of the Year this work, which was being carried out by contract, had fallen greatly in arrears and was generally unsatisfactory. As the termination of the contract fell in March the Council decided to adopt the suggestion of the Sanitary Inspector to organise the scheme as an Authority undertaking: the Council providing labour and vehicles. At the end

of six months this Officer was able to report general satisfaction in the work which had been undertaken. While the more remote parishes have not, as yet, been able to be met by a regular service of refuse collection, it has been found possible to increase the local facilities and offer this convenience to local Government Undertakings.

In addition to refuse collection, the Authority has organised a scheme for salvage. In relation to this one of the chief difficulties has been the linkage of parishes with the governing authority.

DISINFESTATION

From time to time your Officer has found it necessary to have bedding and clothes treated and, through the courtesy of the Master of the local Institution, the use of the steam disinfector at that Centre has been a great convenience.

SHELTERS

The main work in the twelve months has been directed to the provision of individual accommodation to the most vulnerable housings. In the Donnington Area possible steps were considered to provide some degree of protection by reinforcing the walls of buildings primarily erected as tool-sheds, but this scheme was not adopted. Again, in this area, homes coming within a prescribed radius have to be provided with Morrison Shelters, the complementary parts of which are in the hands of the Surveyor and will be distributed on request.

MORTUARY ACCOMMODATION

The District is at present served through the Joint Mortuary at Newport, but the question of additional accommodation is being considered. Buildings suitable to act temporarily for emergency needs have been established.

SEWERAGE & SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The chief work of the Sanitary Department in dealing with sewage has also been in the Donnington Area. The plant, originally designed to meet peace-time housing requirements, has had to be extended to deal with an increase of double dry-weather flow. Construction has been continued almost entirely throughout the Year and, to expedite the process and conserve space, and prevent nuisance, a sludge digestion tank has been erected and was completed in September: this, together with a gas-holder. With this considerable construction, the works have, at times, had difficulty in meeting the average flow and, at midsummer, disposal at this part was much disorganised. However, by September, general conditions had greatly improved.

Correlated with the main scheme, reconstruction had to be carried out on the effluent channel and temporary sludge lagoons provided. To facilitate access to all parts of the Works and, as a secondary consideration, to give an additional final discharge from the humus tanks, a ditch, running through the centre of the scheme is to be piped. The disposal of sludge, always a difficult problem, gave the Sanitary Inspector much cause for thought and although, through the aid of military personnel stationed locally, sludge beds were able to be emptied and treated, this problem is likely to recur.

On the other principal schemes attention has been directed as required: as at the Hadley-Ketley Plant where precautions had to be taken to guard against the flow of effluent on to adjoining lands - this particularly in times of storm.

At the Longomery Pumping Station the plant which has been in operation many years and designed for a scheme of housing which has now been greatly exceeded, gave rise to difficulties with back-pounding of sewage. The engine and pumps were overhauled, but it was felt and advised by your Consulting Engineer that conditions merited some form of automatic pumping to control sewage flow. This work has been temporarily postponed.

In the High Ercall Parish it was hoped that the emergency scheme which had been constructed, might be coupled to meet the requirements of local residents, but the distance to be traversed before connection were possible and the general configuration of the land precluded a satisfactory conclusion being reached. It is felt, however, that use may be able to be made of these works on the return to normal conditions.

Gullies and ditches have received attention, particularly in the Ellerdine, High Ercall, Cold Hatton, Ercall Magna, Crow Brook and Ketley Bank Areas.

In Edgmond, contract for construction of a piping of a ditch dealing with part of the effluent from the village has been placed. This work has new been completed,

In Horton Village a pipe-line carrying water, was examined to eliminate the possibility of siltage in a neighbourhood particularly liable to flooding. The pipe, on examination, was found to be clean and free from obstruction.

Negotiations were instituted to provide public lavatory accommodation in the Donnington Area, but owing to local opposition, the furtherance of this scheme was deferred.

HOUSING

The Council's impressive scheme at Donnington continues to progress although conditions of labour have greatly retarded the original time scheme. At the end of the Year 324 houses had been completed and were in occupation.

The Council during the period under review made provision for such ancillary services as might be expected in any such settlement. Among these were sites for religious buildings and, for the present, temporary accommodation: shops and the selection of representative trades, the conversion of premises to serve as a Fire Station, re-conditioning of an existing building to provide for the future home of a Sanitary Officer, the selection of land for the building of a School Clinic (this in collaboration with the County Authority) and the construction of Medical Premises to be used by a Resident Practitioner. Recreation facilities have been considered and a well attended meeting in Wellington discussed all aspects of a proposed Youth Centre.

A local body has been elected to deal with the letting of houses as they are completed or become vacant. In relation to this there is great need that this Committee should exercise every discretion in adopting or recommending new tenants. The homes offered are of a high standard of construction, embody sound hygienic principles and should be able to be transferred, if they have already been occupied, in a sound state of decorative repair. From hearsay it would seem that close supervision is necessary if the Authority is to be protected in their enterprise. Already the Architect has had his attention directed to the haphazard erection of unsightly sheds on the scheme. The Council has placed one of these properties at the disposal of the Military to serve as an emergency centre.

The further construction of houses in the Edgmond District has been considered and deferred.

Although a survey of houses with a view to cataloguing defective drains and privies has been made by the Sanitary Inspectors, general repair work has been difficult to maintain. In the Ketley Parish improvement has resulted by the connection of some property to the main sewer.

The housing scheme at Mannerley Lane, where buildings in various stages of completion have stood since the beginning of the War has again received the attention of the Council. As a result of consultations with the Ministry of Health, permission was granted to complete six houses already in an advanced state of construction but the scheme had eventually to be abandoned.

On the above site it was found that articles were being removed and stolen. The Surveyor has taken steps to remove to a place of safety such building material as might easily be carried away.

The Council, while not actively pursuing the policy of the Rural Workers' Act, granted permission to the owners of property near Hadley to carry out reconstruction under this scheme.

An attempt was made to re-occupy property, condemned but still standing in the Stockton District, but the Authority refused consent. During the course of the year itinerant dwellers have settled from time to time in various parts but their movement has been controlled.

MEAT AND FISH

The service of meat to the District continues to come from the Central Abattoirs at Shrewsbury and Newport. Locally, little food has had to be condemned. Assistance was given to the Newport Authority in the inspection of food during the absence of their Sanitary Inspector. The provision of hot meals at mid-day has received the attention of several schools in the neighbourhood and where adopted has been a great success. By co-operation with the Military Authority canteen facilities have been provided for workers serving on Council contracts. A British Restaurant has been considered for the Donnington Area, but the scheme had to be abandoned.

MILK AND DAIRIES

As circumstances permitted, farms and dairies have been visited but no comprehensive schemes for improvement have been considered on account of the difficulty in putting them into practice. A drive with the view to securing a higher degree of purity of milk is to be carried out in certain Counties, of which Shropshire is one, and it is anticipated that this will operate early in the incoming year. The sampling and examination will be done through the Harper Adams College.

FACTORIES AND WORKS

The normal routine of factory inspection has been carried out regularly. A nuisance created by a stone-crushing works was investigated. Under certain conditions houses in this neighbourhood were subjected to volumes of dust which penetrated into all articles of food. The cause of this nuisance, a failure to screen on extraction, was discussed with the management and a promise that precautions would be taken was received. No further complaints have been made.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE

In the past, reference has been made to the extent of the Area with its diversity of dispersion of population in relationship to the local spread of disease. During the current year zymotic disease did not present itself to any extraordinary degree but yet, during the first nine months, there was a steady return of notifiable illness. Happily, at no time was there any reason for concern.

Measles, while not generally epidemic, gave rise to some 220 cases amongst the civil population. It was noted from the returns that the weight of the outbreak was borne by the more rural parishes and a large proportion of these cases developed around the Town of Newport. Of the 220 cases nearly 170 occurred in the Second Quarter. The record for the last Quarter was marred by the development of one case.

Whooping Cough, again more noticeable in the Areas attacked by Measles, reached its height in the First Quarter, some 50 cases being notified. In the Second and Third, there was a gradual recession and in the last Quarter, three cases only were reported.

The total for the whole year was slightly over one hundred cases.

Scarlet Fever, generally of a mild innocuous type, gave rise to 17 cases: 8 of these were in the first three months and no Quarter was free.

Diphtheria also occurred in every Quarter but the ten cases which were brought to notice cannot be regarded as an unduly high frequency. Generally, the cases were widely dispersed both in time and place and any slight tendency to localisation occurred in the Rock Area. Of the ten cases one was immunised, nine were treated in hospital and no deaths occurred.

The scheme for immunisation which had been in practice for the past six years received a new impetus from the Ministry of Health's call for increased effort and the placing of additional facilities before the public: the cessation of charge for immunisation reagent. There was no need for the Council to plan afresh to meet the Ministry's requirements but some minor reorganisation was put in hand. The offering of free treatment to all classes of the community was readily granted by the Authority and attempts were made to secure the co-operation of the Local Medical Practitioners in the carrying out of this work on a sessional basis. As this was unable to be negotiated the general clinical work of protection was taken over by the Medical Officer of Health. The response to the appeal was satisfactory and few difficulties were experienced in the administration.

At the end of the Year 18% pre-school children and infants together with 72% schoolchildren had availed themselves of the scheme. These figures represent a protection which compares very favourably with any others in the County.

It is to be noted that every convenience was offered to parents and their trust in the service was rewarded by the almost complete absence of reaction in the children treated.
A small minority did not give consent, failed to appear after agreement or after the child had had a first injection. While it may be conceded that parents may have conscientious scruples against this and other forms of vaccination-type treatment, nothing can be said in defence of those who start the course and fail to finish.

It is expected that a scheme, with the County Health Department controlling the administration over a large number of children, will be inaugurated early in the incoming year.

Diseases associated with war and overcrowded conditions were relatively few: cerebro-spinal fever 5 cases and Paratyphoid Fever 2 cases. Dysentery might also be included in this group of which disease 5 cases occurred. The Paratyphoid (Enteric) patients had no inter association although they occurred in the third Quarter. One of the cases was found in a gipsy encampment Pneumonia followed the usual seasonal incidence: eleven notifications in the First Quarter and eight in the Second. In all there were 26 cases.

Other notifications were :-

Erysipelas ...	5
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	4
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1

The Tuberculosis Register at the end of the Year was as follows :-

	MALES		FEMALES	
	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary	Pulmonary	Non-Pulmonary
1940	58	53	46	61
1941	59	54	49	63

It is difficult to make a conclusive reply which would account for the rise in cases in the Year but the Council would do well to remember the frequency of this illness in their midst. Many patients move to this District as an escapement from the more hazardous life in the towns but this does not account completely for the present position. The recruitment of young life to factory work, the irregular hours, together with general stress and strain have been suggested as possible aggravations. It has to be noted that the upward trend has been experienced over the whole of the Country recently.

Reference has been made in earlier reports to the possibility of spread of contagious skin conditions - impetigo and scabies. During the current year this Authority has been much troubled by the continued presence of the latter: a constantly recurrent complaint. While it was found possible to remove evacuees infected to certain quarters offered by the County Authority, this was carried out only with difficulty. So far as local residents were concerned, little was able to be done. The Sanitary Officers spent much time in trying to allocate these residents to places, institutions and the like, where the requisite treatment could be carried out, but despite frequent attempts, failure to secure accommodation was often the result.

Towards the end of the Year, the Council decided that the only means of being sure of the provision of adequate treatment and control was by having premises of their own. To secure this, negotiations were begun with a neighbouring Authority and it is expected that in the incoming year, a former infectious diseases block will be available for resident treatment and supervision.

W.A.M.STEWART

Medical Officer of Health

15th July, 1942.